



THE TEXAS THUNDERBOLT

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE -- FORT WORTH, TX
SERVING ALL OF NORTH TEXAS
WWW.WEATHER.GOV/FORTWORTH

FALL 2009

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NWS Fort Worth Leadership Team

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*Background image is courtesy of Alan Moller.
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Proposed Change to NWS Hail Criterion

Currently, your National Weather Service in Fort Worth issues severe thunderstorm warnings for penny size hail (3/4 inch) or larger and winds of 58 mph or greater.

As of January 5, 2010, the severe thunderstorm warning hail criterion will likely change to quarter size (1 inch) or larger. The wind criterion of 58 mph or greater will remain unchanged.

All NWS offices in the Southern Region, spanning from New Mexico to Florida, will participate in this change in January. Offices in the NWS Central Region, from Colorado to Indiana, are presently issuing severe thunderstorm warnings for 1 inch hail or larger.

If you have any questions about this change, please contact Mark Fox, NWS Fort Worth Warning Coordination Meteorologist at Mark.Fox@noaa.gov.



Mark Your Calendars!

Storm spotter training season is quickly approaching. NWS Fort Worth will conduct spotter classes all across North Texas from early January through early April. All classes are free and open to the public. Look for the latest class schedule posted on our webpage in December.

We look forward to seeing everyone!

www.weather.gov/fortworth

Lewisville, Burleson, and Commerce are StormReady!

by Eric Martello

NWS Fort Worth recently recognized Lewisville, Burleson, and Commerce as StormReady. This brings the total number of StormReady communities to 23 in North Texas.

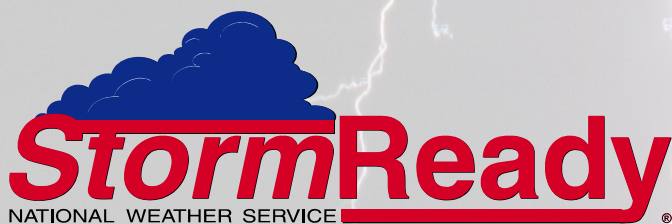
Lewisville was recognized on September 14, Burleson on September 21, and Commerce on October 6.

StormReady was developed in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1999 and is now a nationwide, grassroots effort by the NWS to assist communities in developing plans to handle severe weather and flooding. The program is voluntary, but provides a worthwhile partnership between the NWS and local community officials on how best to prepare for hazardous weather.

To qualify for StormReady, a community's Emergency Operations Center must be equipped to gather weather information through multiple outlets, have a 24-hr point of contact, and have access to various means of communications (pagers, online chatrooms, cell phones, HAM radio, etc).

"StormReady encourages communities to take a proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations and public awareness in partnership with their local NWS office," said Bill Bunting, Meteorologist-In-Charge of NWS Fort Worth.

Mark Fox, NWS Fort Worth Warning Coordination Meteorologist, stated "the program is designed to help communities improve communication and safety skills needed to save lives before, during, and after a severe weather event."



For more details on the StormReady program:

www.stormready.noaa.gov



Above:

(L-R) Lewisville Fire Dept. Division Chief for Public Education, Steve Carter; NWS Fort Worth meteorologist, Eric Martello; NWS Fort Worth MIC, Bill Bunting; Lewisville Emergency Manager, Summer Wilhelm; NWS Fort Worth WCM, Mark Fox.



Above:

(L-R) Burleson Battalion Chief, Brent Batla; Burleson Mayor Ken Shetter; NWS Fort Worth WCM, Mark Fox; Burleson Fire Chief, Gary Wisdom.



Above:

(L-R) NWS Fort Worth WCM Mark Fox; Commerce EMC/ Asst. Police Chief, Steve Harrison; Commerce Police Chief, Kerry Crews.

DR. WEATHER'S WISDOM



FROST



The dew point is the temperature at which condensation, such as dew or frost, will form. A dew point temperature of 32° or less is typically referred to as the frost point.

Frost typically forms if the temperature on a given surface cools to the frost point. However, frost can form when the reported temperature is still several degrees above freezing.

Maybe you have seen frost on car tops or lawns when the temperature was above freezing. How is this possible?



All official air temperature readings are taken in instrument shelters that are located about 5 feet above the ground. On calm, clear nights, temperatures can vary drastically depending on location. For example, the temperature at the level of the thermometer (5 ft above ground) might be 35° , but the temperature at ground level could be 30° . Temperatures can also vary over bare soil, grass, and concrete.

Thus, frost can form on the ground (where temperatures may be at or below freezing), while the official air temperature is above freezing. As a result, sensitive vegetation can be damaged or killed even before the season's first official freeze.



Did you Know?

For DFW:

The average first freeze is November 22.

The earliest freeze was October 22, 1898.

The latest first freeze was January 4, 1972.

For Waco:

The average first freeze is November 23.

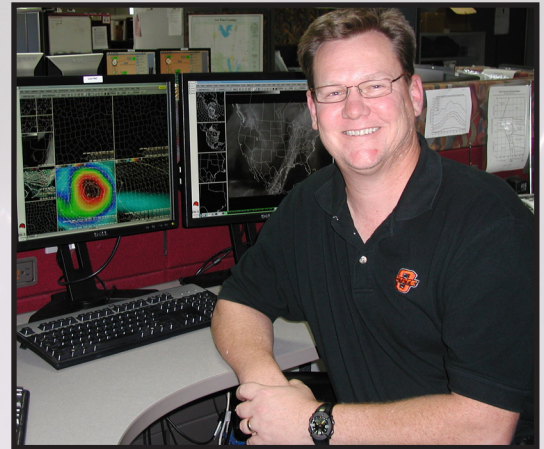
The earliest freeze was October 24, 1917.

The latest first freeze was December 22, 1967.

Meet our new Warning Coordination Meteorologist, Mark Fox

Mark, how did you become interested in weather?

I can actually pinpoint the exact date I got interested in weather. I was 9 years old on Friday, the 13th of June 1975. A tornado, later rated F3, moved through my hometown of Stillwater, Oklahoma (**GO STATE!**). We lived on a small hill just west of town and had the perfect storm spotter location. My family and I watched the tornado develop and move through the city. After that, I was hooked. I started to follow weather information as much as I could, which was pretty easy to do growing up in north central Oklahoma.



Tell us about your weather background.

During high school, my fascination with weather coincided with my other hobby, baseball. I became an amateur forecaster by watching cloud formations before games, mainly to try and forecast whether or not we'd be rained out that afternoon or night. I went to college at Oklahoma Christian University on a baseball scholarship, but injured my knee during my freshman year. Since the Texas Rangers weren't exactly knocking on my door to offer a contract, I hung up the spikes and concentrated on getting a degree in meteorology. I enrolled at the University of Oklahoma and obtained my Meteorology degree in 1989.

Despite having a face for radio, my first job as a professional meteorologist was as a broadcaster. I began my career as a TV meteorologist for a satellite station of KTEN-TV, at K08KK in Paris, Texas. The small TV station didn't last long, unfortunately, so I applied for a promotion and moved to KFDX-TV in Wichita Falls, TX in December of 1989. I spent about 10 years with KFDX, before applying for a position in the National Weather Service.

Skip Ely, the MIC before Bill Bunting, was brave enough to take a chance on a TV meteorologist, and hired me in July of 1999. Since then, I have worked as a forecaster at the NWS Amarillo and Lubbock offices, and as the regional training officer for NWS Southern Region Headquarters before taking over for Gary as WCM at NWS Fort Worth.

What is your role as Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM)?

My role is to become a partner with our emergency management and media communities. The WCM, in my opinion, should spend nearly as much time out of the office as they spend in it. That time outside the office would be spent talking with our partners, learning how their duties are performed, then coming back to the office and trying to find ways to incorporate the NWS knowledge and expertise, so our partners can make informed decisions.

What do you like most about your job?

What I like most is taking with our partners. Talking to partners about impending or occurring weather, and helping people make decisions that protect life and property is the rewarding part of the job. Of course, forecasting the weather itself is a challenge that I have always enjoyed (except for the occasional busted forecast).